TL3514

Lisbon, 21st August 1995

To the United Nations General Secretary
Your Excellency Boutros - Boutros Ghali

The below undersigned are a group of organisations which are involved in several areas of Portuguese political, social, trade union and cultural life and, for that reason, have an important role on this country's public opinion. We would like to welcome you and hope that you will enjoy a pleasant and fruitful stay among us.

Taking advantage of your presence in Portugal, we think it is imperative to bring to your knowledge the concerns we share regarding an issue that you have been directing due to the mandate given to you by the U.N. General Assembly: East Timor. The news we receive almost every day regarding imprisonment, torture, deaths and disappearances in that territory illegally occupied by Indonesia both disturb and shock us. We feel that the need to change that situation is extremely urgent, especially since, despite the commitments entered into by Indonesia, the situation in East Timor has been getting worse.

Therefore we urge Your Excellency, to ensure that the negotiating process which you direct is not discredited, to exert pressure on Indonesia to comply with the successive resolutions of UN bodies (some of which Indonesia agreed to respect). These are, namely, free access to the territory by independent observers and Human Right's organisations as well as the release of East Timorese political prisoners, in particular the head of the Resistance, Xanana Gusmão.

We also ask you to take measures together with the Indonesian Government aiming, not only at a gradual withdrawal of the military forces of occupation, the main agent of the above-mentioned Human Right's violations but also to promote a U.N. presence on a permanent basis on the territory. The presence of the U.N. may have an important role as a stabiliser and to ensure that all measures agreed within the negotiations framework are enforced.

We would like to applaud the efforts you have been personally devoting to the East Timor question, as well as the commitment of the team you have appointed to deal with the subject. They are both responsible for the discrete progress

which has already led the Timorese to be a part, although indirectly, of the ongoing negotiation process. It is essential to take this route, giving the Timorese, those who are principally affected, a an increasing say and a chance to participate more and more. It is only when the Timorese themselves choose their own destiny, by way of a real act of self-determination, that the roots of the problem can be reached and contribute to a fair and lasting solution of the conflict.

Sincerely

A Paz é Possível em Timor-Leste
Associação Académica de Coimbra
Associação Académica de Lisboa
Associação 12 de Novembro
CGTP
Comissão "Liberdade para Xanana, Liberdade para Timor"
Comissão para os Direitos do Povo Maubere
Conselho Nacional de Juventude
Federação Académica do Porto
Movimento Cristão para a Paz
Plataforma Internacional de Juristas por Timor-Leste
Plataforma Nacional das ONGD Portuguesas
União Geral de Trabalhadores